

Dr Shattuck, Dr Wojcik and I appreciate the strong support of Drs Walter R. Tschinkel, S.B. Vinson and E.O. Wilson for the proposed conservation of *Solenopsis invicta* Buren. Their comments together with the signatures of 76 colleagues (see BZN 56: 28) reflect the overwhelming support of the fire ant research community for this action. I need to clarify the concern of Stephen W. Taber that we are adopting 'mere convenience as a standard in scientific endeavor'. Quite the contrary — our proposal is to establish an exception and not a standard. Furthermore, our proposal was motivated by the principle of nomenclatural stability, not 'mere convenience'.

Comments on the proposed designation of neotypes for the nominal species
Vespertilio pipistrellus Schreber, 1774 and *V. pygmaeus* Leach, 1825 (currently
Pipistrellus pipistrellus and *P. pygmaeus*; Mammalia, Chiroptera)
(Case 3073; see BZN 56: 182–186)

(1) D.W. Yalden

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I wish to register my support for this case and express my hope that the Commission will reach an early conclusion. It seems to me only sensible to conserve the name *P. pipistrellus* for a bat which is very abundant across much of western Europe, including Britain. The use of *P. pygmaeus* (Leach, 1825) for the cryptic species previously confounded with *P. pipistrellus* is perhaps more contentious, but it conserves an early name and prevents prolonged searching among later names whose attribution to the new species will be no more certain; its prompt adoption will prevent an unseemly scramble for alternative names. This potential problem has been developing, from taxonomic suspicion to certainty, over 6 or 7 years. It has become the practice to refer to these species by informal names, in the absence of formal nomenclature for them (formal nomenclature having been delayed by lengthy consideration of the best course of action). With the forthcoming *Handbook of British Mammals* (4th edition) currently under active preparation, it is time this nomenclature was formalized. The present proposals seem an eminently sensible way of doing so, and I support and urge their rapid approval by the Commission.

(2) John D. Altringham

*School of Biology, Louis Compton Building, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT,
U.K.*

I am writing in support of the case for the proposed designation of neotypes of *P. pipistrellus* and *P. pygmaeus*. I believe the evidence in support of the taxonomic conclusions is now overwhelming. I encourage an early resolution of the issue, since both species are the subject of current research and of a Biodiversity Action Plan.

(3) Tony Lane

*East Yorkshire Bat Group, 7 Orchard Road, Skidby, Cottingham,
East Yorkshire, HU16 5TL, U.K.*

To name the new species of 55kHz pipistrelle as *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, a name given by Leach (1825) to a small (immature, pygmy?) pipistrelle specimen would seem to be highly misleading unless a tissue sample of the original specimen matches the genetic pattern of recent authentic specimens. More acceptable names would reflect the joint discoverers or a distinguishing feature of the species (such as the 'soprano' call). So far as I am aware, Yorkshire specimens of the 55kHz pipistrelle are very closely matched in size (forearm measurement) to the common pipistrelle, so it is incorrect to regard the new species as significantly smaller or as a pygmy pipistrelle.

(4) P.A. Racey

*Department of Zoology, University of Aberdeen, Tillydrone Avenue,
Aberdeen AB24 2TZ, Scotland, U.K.*

I write to support most strongly the proposal by Jones & Barratt to adopt the names *P. pipistrellus* and *P. pygmaeus* for the 45kHz and 55kHz pipistrelles respectively. I was involved in the work that established an 11% divergence in a 630bp region of the cytochrome *b* gene; this divergence, together with the fact that the populations mate assortatively, is convincing evidence that these are two distinct species.

It is more than six years since Jones & van Parijs (1993) described clear differences between the phonic types of pipistrelles, and since then the scientific community has awaited clarification of their nomenclature. It is therefore urgent that this matter is resolved, particularly as a new edition of *The Handbook of British Mammals* will shortly go to press and this will be expected to provide the necessary clarification and stability. I hope the Commission will support the proposals at the earliest opportunity.

(5) Wieslaw Bogdianowicz

*Museum & Institute of Zoology, Polish Academy of Sciences, Wilcza 64, Box 1007,
00-679 Warszawa, Poland*

The proposal for providing neotypes for the two broadly sympatric cryptic species of pipistrelle should be approved as rapidly as possible. Although an original specimen of *P. pygmaeus* (Leach, 1825) exists it cannot be allocated to either species with complete certainty, and the most suitable way forward is to designate a neotype. If a later specific name (such as *mediterraneus* Cabrera, 1904; see para. 6 of the application) were to be adopted a whole list of synonyms would be available to replace it and this would not give stability.

(6) John R. Speakman

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Aberdeen AB24 3TZ, Scotland, U.K.*

I am in full agreement with the application, and would emphasize the importance of moving to a speedy resolution of the issue. At present there is considerable research activity on these clearly separate species, and descriptions of this work are hampered by the lack of certainty over the correct names. Workers have resorted to describing the species as 'phonotypes' of *P. pipistrellus*, and this an inadequate and potentially confusing state of affairs.